

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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TAGS: PFOR, PINS, SHUM, UY
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON U.S. POSITION ON AID

REF: MONTEVIDEO 810

1. SUMMARY. IN PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 2, FONMIN ROVIRA REITERATED THE GOU POSITION THAT THE USG IS INTERFERING IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF URUGUAY BY LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATION WITH MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE HOOPES AND EXPECTED THAT OUR RELATIONS WOULD IMPROVE. COMMENTS BY ROVIRA AND ANOTHER FONOFF SOURCE SUGGEST THAT THE GOU MAY HAVE FELT OBLIGED TO ACT, BUT RELUCTANTLY, AND THAT IT DOES NOT SEEK TO FURTHER DAMAGE RELATIONS. HOWEVER, MILITARY SOURCES SUGGEST A CONTINUING HARD LINE WHICH COULD IMPACT ADVERSELY ON OUR HUMAN RIGHTS EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN A BRIEF, TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE FOREIGN MINISTER ALEJAN-
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DRO ROVIRA REITERATED THAT THE GOU CONSIDERS THE LINKING OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID WITH A COUNTRY'S PERFORMANCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AN UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS

3. THE FONMIN COMMENTED, "THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF URUGUAY IS INSPIRED BY THE TRADITIONS OF THE REPUBLIC IN THIS AREA AND

BY THE PRINCIPLES AND NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW. IT IS WORTHWHILE TO REMEMBER WHAT ARE THOSE PRINCIPLES WHICH ARE PRACTICED BY URUGUAY: (1) THE STRICT RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF NON-INTERVENTION IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES WITH REFERENCE TO ASSISTANCE WHICH IS PUBLIC AND WELL-KNOWN IMPLIES AN INADMISSIBLE INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF (OTHER) COUNTRIES, INASMUCH AS IT BASES ASSISTANCE ON ITS OWN JUDGEMENT OF MATTERS WHICH ARE WITHIN THE EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN OF DOMESTIC JURISDICTION, IN THIS CASE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. BASED ON SUCH JUDGEMENT, IT ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE ON A STATE A SANCTION BY MEANS OF LIMITING OR REFUSING SUCH ASSISTANCE ACCORDING TO ITS OWN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC OR MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS OVER SUCH MATTERS WHICH ARE, AS I SAID, WITHIN THE INTERNAL JURISDICTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES. THIS JUDGEMENT OF A STATE IS REPEATED IN VARIOUS STEPS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF THE U.S. BUDGET AS EVIDENCED BY THE NOW WELL-KNOWN KOCH AMENDMENT. THE JUDGEMENT OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS ALSO BASED ON INFORMATION WHICH IS UNTRUSTWORTHY, DISTORTED AND WHICH COMES FROM ANTI-URUGUAYAN PRESSURE GROUPS WITH THE RESULTING MEDIA REPERCUSSIONS. (2) ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE CANNOT BE CONDITIONED BY CONSIDERATIONS OUTSIDE OF THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT OR PROJECTS BEING CONSIDERED. THIS PRINCIPLE HAS A VERY OLD AND RICH TRADITION IN THE JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL POSITIONS OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES."

4. ASKED IF THIS INCIDENT WOULD CHANGE THE EXISTING RELATIONS BETWEEN URUGUAY AND THE U.S., THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPLIED, "ABSOLUTELY NOT. WE HAVE THE BEST INTENTIONS AS WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD AND OUR DESIRE IS TO BETTER THESE RELATIONS IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE AND WITH THE BEST OF GOOD WILL."

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5. AN UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN TOLD A WIRE SERVICE THAT ITS PROTEST WAS ONLY A NOTICE TO A "FRIENDLY" GOVERNMENT THAT URUGUAY'S SOVEREIGNTY HAD BEEN VIOLATED. THE SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY ADDED THAT URUGUAY INTENDS TO GO NO FURTHER AND THAT HOW RELATIONS DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE DEPENDS ON THE USG. THE SPOKESMAN REPORTEDLY SAID THAT NO ONE COULD ARGUE THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS ACTING ON THE BASIS OF CERTAIN "VERY RESPECTABLE" POSITIONS WHICH URUGUAY AGREES WITH, THAT URUGUAY BACKS THESE PRINCIPLES OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT URUGUAY BELIEVES THE USG IS ACTING UPON FALSE INFORMATION AND HOPES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL ORDER A PROFOUND EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION.

6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE MEASURED TONE OF THE FONMINS'S COMMENTS INDICATE THAT URUGUAY HOPES NOT TO ALLOW THIS INCIDENT, WHICH HAS BROUGHT URUGUAYAN-U.S. RELATIONS TO A LOW POINT, TO DEVELOP INTO ANYTHING WORSE. THE TONE OF THE MINISTER'S WORDS INDICATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT FELT FORCED INTO ITS POSITION AND WAS

REQUIRED BY REASONS OF SOVEREIGNTY, NATIONAL PRIDE AND JURIDICAL PRINCIPLE (NON-INTERVENTION) TO RESPOND AS IT DID TO THE REMARKS OF SECRETARY VANCE. THERE IS ALSO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE MINISTER'S FIRM, BUT CONCILIATORY TONE, RESPONDS TO THE NEED TO REASSURE THE PEOPLE OF URUGUAY THAT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. ARE NOT SO JEOPARDIZED AS TO LIKELY GET WORSE. WHILE THE U.S. IS MUCH ADMIRERED HERE BY THE PEOPLE AND U.S. GOOD OPINION IS SOUGHT AND VALUED, THEY ALSO HAVE HIGH SENSITIVITY TO MOTIVATE PRIDE AND DIGNITY; BUT ULTIMATELY THIS SMALL BUFFER BETWEEN GREAT NEIGHBORS, ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL, LOOKS TO THE U.S. AS ITS LAST RESORT ASSURING STABILITY AND SECURITY. THERE IS THEREFORE A NATURAL AND DEEP-SEATED CONCERN FOR THE STATE OF U.S.-URUGUAYAN RELATIONS AND IT IS THIS, WE BELIEVE, WHICH HAS IN PART MOTIVATED THE FONMIN'S TONE. MUCH IMPORTANCE, HOWEVER, SHOULD BE PUT UPON THE FOREIGN OFFICE REMARK, "HOW RELATIONS DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE DEPEND ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT". FORTIFYING THIS CAUTION ARE REPORTS FROM SOURCES CLOSE TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MILITARY WHICH SUGGEST AN ATTITUDE QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S RELATIVELY MODERATE TONE. THESE SOURCES INDICATE THAT THE HARDLINERS IN THE MILITARY HAVE SEIZED UPON THE OPPORTUNITY AND THAT THE REACTION TO THE U.S. STATEMENT COULD WELL HAVE A DELITERIOUS, RATHER THAN HELPFUL, IMPACT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION HERE. SIRACUSA

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